

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission Criteria for Unified Watershed Assessment

CRITFC participated in processes with the states of Oregon and Washington to develop Unified Watershed Assessment. CRITFC supports these states in their categorization of watersheds into category one through four watersheds. In addition, CRITFC supports the state of Oregon's prioritization of watersheds as high priority watersheds eligible for restoration funding using their screening criteria. CRITFC does not support the state of Idaho's proposal, since the state of Idaho refused tribal input in this process. In addition, the state of Idaho did not prioritize watersheds based on the 8-digit HUC categorization as the EPA requested. CRITFC suggests that Idaho take advantage of the deadline extension for the Unified Watershed Assessments to work together with the tribes in Idaho in accordance with the EPA criteria for this process. Within Washington and Oregon's category I watershed priorities, CRITFC would prioritize the 8-digit HUCs slightly differently based on a different set of criteria.

Category I watersheds In Need of Restoration

Watersheds in Oregon and Washington were placed into this group on the basis of presence of waterbodies within a watershed on a 303(d) list promulgated by a state, tribe, or EPA. In addition, Washington used the criteria of 1) Fish concerns as identified by the Salmon and Steelhead Stock Inventory and areas identified under the Endangered Species Act for listed species of anadromous fish or species proposed for listing; and 2) Shellfish concerns.

Based on this criteria, all HUCs in the state of Washington, and all but three in the State of Oregon were placed in Category I. Idaho used a different prioritization process which did not prioritize by HUCs so it is difficult to comment on.

Basis for Prioritization of Category I watersheds

High:

Recognition in Spirit of the Salmon, Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit, the tribal plan for watershed restoration in the Columbia Basin; 2) Identification by tribal fishery managers as a critical basin for salmon restoration 3) Culturally significant resources in the subbasin; and 4) Stock status. Stock status includes listed stocks or extirpated, damaged, or depressed as determined by Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit stock assessment.

The basins identified by the tribes as priorities based on these criteria are:

High Priority

Upper Grande Ronde
Lower Grande Ronde
Clearwater
Umatilla
Walla Walla
Upper John Day
Lower Deschutes
Yakama
Klickitat
Mainstem Columbia
Mainstem Snake
Lower North Fork Clearwater
Upper North Fork Clearwater
South Fork Clearwater
Lochsa
Middle Fork Clearwater
Lower Selway
Upper Selway
Hell's Canyon
Middle Salmon Chamberlin
Lower Salmon
Little Salmon
South Fork Salmon
Lower Middle Fork Salmon
Upper Salmon

Medium Priority:

Wind/White Salmon
Lower John Day
Middle Columbia Hood
Klickitat
Naches
Wenatchee
Entiat
Methow
Okanogan
Wallowa
Imnaha
North Fork John Day
Trout
Hells Canyon
Pahsmerca
Lemhi

Low Priority:

Remaining HUCs.

Since the mainstem Columbia and Snake are not listed as single HUCs, we did not know exactly what the most appropriate way to include these is, and therefore added them to the list of HUCs. These mainstems are high priority for tribal restoration.

In addition, we feel that putting restoration dollars into these HUCs would be a good investment on the part of EPA because the Bonneville Power Administration currently is funding many restoration projects in these HUCs. The following table shows Bonneville Power Administration recommended funding for 1999 Fish and Wildlife tribal projects in these subbasins.

Upper & Lower Grande Ronde	\$3,017,172
Clearwater	\$10,936,469
Salmon	\$1,960,158
Umatilla	\$1,747,021
Walla Walla	\$4,365,441
Upper John Day	\$1,445,066
Lower Deschutes	\$320,000
Yakima	\$13,369,753
Klickitat	\$844,662
Mainstem Columbia	\$283,230
Mainstem Snake	\$1,325,039



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

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Unified Watershed Assessment Working Group
4503F
Washington DC 20460

September 30, 1998

Dear Unified Watershed Assessment Working Group,

Attached is the Unified Watershed Assessment completed by the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. The tribes participated in processes with both the states of Oregon and Washington to develop a Unified Watershed Assessment. In addition, we believe that it is important to submit our own assessment highlighting the tribes priorities for funding. The watersheds that rank the highest in our assessment are excellent candidates to receive funding for restoration work. These watersheds are areas in which other agencies have made significant investments in restoration, and therefore any work done would be likely to produce significant results.

If you have any questions or comments on our proposal, please feel free to call myself or Jill Ory at (503) 238-0667.

Sincerely,

Donald Sampson, Manager
Watershed Department

CC: Chuck Clarke, Regional Administration, EPA
Teena Reichgott, US EPA, Region 10